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AUTHORITY

# AMETHYST

## PRINCESS OF GEMWORLD

### DEADLY REFLECTIONS!





UNTIL TONIGHT, THE THOUGHT OF SLEEP HAS FILLED HER HEART WITH TERROR...

NOW HER BONES DRY OUT FOR REST, AND HER MIND'S PREPARED FOR WHAT MUST LAY AHEAD! AND YET...

...FOR SLEEP HAS MEANT A JOURNEY TO A PLACE WHERE NIGHTMARES ARE REAL!

I CAN'T!

NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY, I CAN'T FALL ASLEEP!

EVERY OTHER NIGHT, I'VE CONKED RIGHT OUT AND BEEN DRAWN TO THE GEMMERS BY CITRINA'S MAGIC CALL!

IT'S BEEN AWFUL!

BUT NOW I WANT TO GO! SARDONYX IS PLANNING TO KILL CITRINA AND WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO KNOW IT!

I'VE GOT TO HELP HER!

I'VE GOT TO GO TO SLEEP!

YOUR MIND IS IN TOO MUCH TORMENT, AMY! YOU'RE FIGHTING TOO HARD WHEN YOU SHOULD BE LETTING GO!

MY MOTHER USED TO SING ME A SONG...

♪ Floating forever on soft rainbow clouds, The dreamers have gathered in colorful crowds... ♪

THERE-- THAT'S RIGHT.

♪ And dreamers won't speak of the dreams they have seen when morning awakens in emerald green. ♪





WHAT IN THE-- IS THAT ~~SOUND~~ SINGING?

I THOUGHT THEY WENT TO BED ~~AGLAS~~ AGO!



ME TOO! I'M GOING TO--

DON'T, MARION!



YOU JUST MADE A SPEECH AT DINNER ABOUT ~~RESTING~~ AMY, REMEMBER?

NOW WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO LIVE UP TO THOSE WORDS!



SHE KNOWS THAT SHE CAN ALWAYS COME TO US WHEN SHE'S READY.

BUT ONLY IF SHE'S HERE, HERB... ONLY IF SHE'S STILL ON EARTH!



IT'S TIME.

AMY IS ASLEEP, AND IF ~~CITRINA'S~~ MAGIC IS GOING TO CARRY HER TO THE GENWORLD AGAIN, SHE WILL--



THERE! ~~AMETHYST'S~~ SPIRIT ARISES ONCE AGAIN!

MAY GREEY ~~MAGIC~~ WATCH OVER YOU, PRINCESS!



CITRINA! THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE ALIVE!

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, WITCH-MOTHER, BUT YOU CAN REST PEACEFULLY NOW...

I'VE COME BACK!



SUDDENLY THERE IS MAGIC--AND A CHILD'S DREAMS BECOME REALITY! FOR ON A WORLD OF FANTASY, AMY WINSTON LEADS ANOTHER LIFE--THE LIFE OF...

# AMETHYST

PRINCESS  
OF GEMWORLD

THE STORM'S ARE STILL  
RASING... ALL ACROSS THE  
GEMWORLD, UNLESS I  
MISS MY GUESS!

BUT THAT GLOWING  
GLOW OUT IN THE FOREST  
AT THE EDGE OF THE  
CASTLE GROUNDS...

THAT'S SOMETHING  
SPECIAL! THAT'S WHAT  
I'VE COME HERE TO  
STOP!

## SECRETS OF THE SANDS

DAN MORGAN & GARY COHN . RIC ESTRADA & BOB SMITH . J. COSTANZA . CARL GIFFORD . KAREN BERGER  
WRITERS ARTISTS LETTERER COLORIST EDITOR







ENNY WAS RIGHT! AFTER WE SAW HIM STEAL THE GOLDEN CLAW &---

--- SHE TOLD ME IT HAD ENOUGH MAGIC TO CUT A SWATH THROUGH THE TREES!

A LAST ISSUE -- KB.

BUT HE'S NOT GOING TO GET ANY FARTHER...

HE'S NOT GOING TO HARM A HAIR ON CITRINA'S HEAD...

...NOT WHILE I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT!

GAME'S OVER, SARDONYX! TIME TO HANG UP YOUR CLAW AND GO HOME!

ANYTHING?--? I'D HEARD YOU HAD RETURNED!

COME TO TAKE YOUR SWEETHEART BACK FROM LADY TURQUOISE, HAVE YOU?

I-I'M HERE TO STOP YOU! PRINCE TOPAZ... DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT!

I KNOW THAT, GIRL! BUT I LOVE TO SEE YOU FOUT...

...AND THUS LOWER YOUR GUARD FOR ME TO STRIKE YOU DOWN WHERE YOU STAND!





YIKES! I JUST  
BARELY GOT MY MYSTIC  
SHIELD UP! I LET HIS  
TAUNTS DISTRACT ME  
LIKE A LITTLE KID!



BUT I'M NOT  
A KID...



...I'M  
ANMETHYST!  
YOU'RE NOT THE  
ONLY CONJURER,  
SARDONYX!



AND HERE ON MY HOME GROUND  
I'M AT MY MOST POWERFUL!

AIEE! WHAT  
DEVILMENT--?!  
THESE BIRDS...  
BESIEGING  
ME!



BUT I'M  
HAVING A  
HARD TIME  
KEEPING UP  
THE ATTACK!

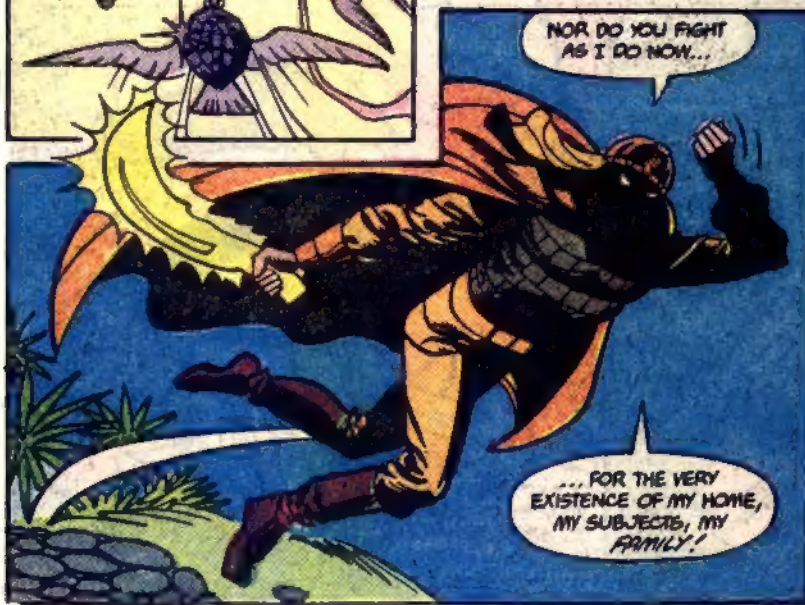
I'VE BEEN LIVING  
MY NORMAL LIFE  
ON EARTH BY DAY...

...AND  
SPENDING MY  
NIGHTS  
HERE!

I'M  
EXHAUSTED!

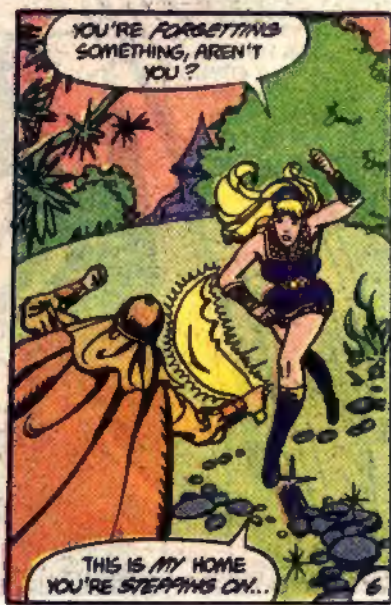


SO MUCH FOR YOUR  
SORCERY, CHILD!  
YOU'RE TALENTED, I'LL  
GRANT IT-- BUT YOU HAVEN'T  
TRAINED AND HONED YOUR  
SKILLS FOR YEARS,  
AS I HAVE!



NOR DO YOU FIGHT  
AS I DO NOW...

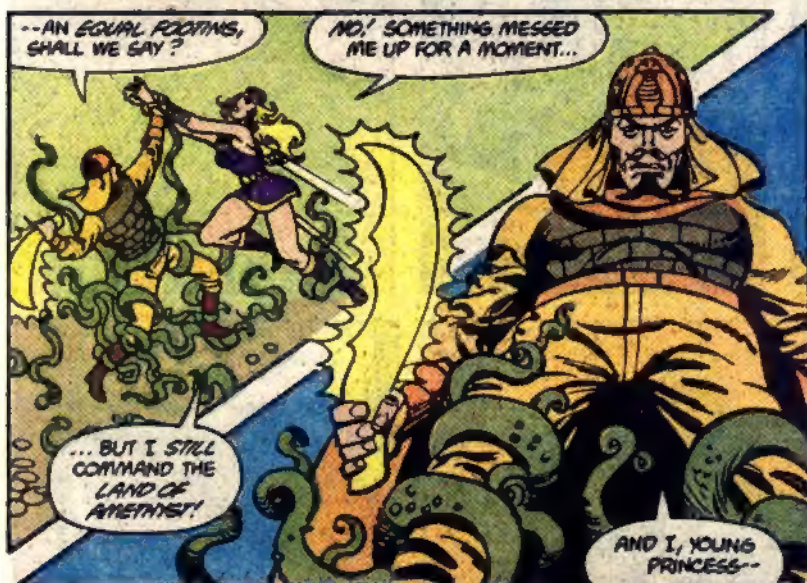
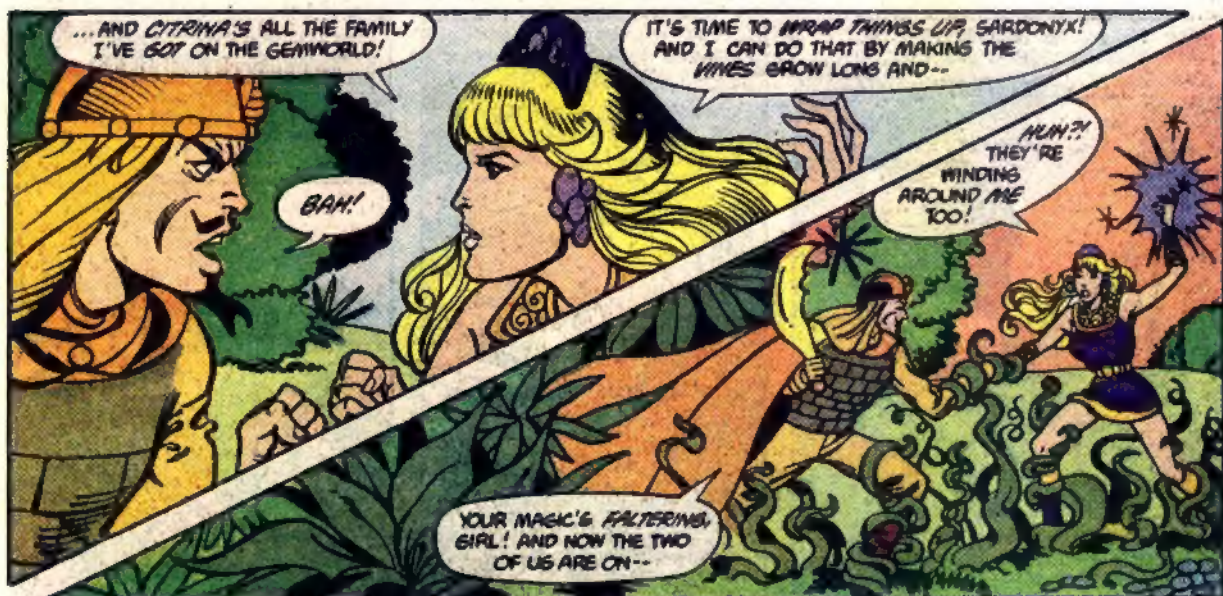
... FOR THE VERY  
EXISTENCE OF MY HOME,  
MY SUBJECTS, MY  
FAMILY!



YOU'RE FORGETTING  
SOMETHING, AREN'T  
YOU?

THIS IS MY HOME  
YOU'RE STEPPING ON...







AND WHILE LORD SARDONYX AND PRINCESS AMETHYST BATTLE TO A STALEMATE...

...A DARK MAN OF MYSTERY GRIMLY ASSESSES THE PEARLNUANCE THAT AFFLICTS ANOTHER TROUBLED REALM

I SENSE THAT THE WITCH-ROTHER IS SAFE FOR NOW... AND I COULD DO NO GOOD ONCE AMETHYST INTERRUPTED ME! \*

BUT HERE...

\* IN ISSUE #4--KB.

HERE AMONG THE STORMY PEAKS THERE IS ONE THREAT I CAN CONQUER!

"THE GREATER AND LESSER WIND DEMONS, GUIDED BY THEIR INSTINCTS AS THE GEMWORLD'S MAGIC GOES AWAY, HAVE SOUGHT SAFETY IN THE DEEP RAVINES OF LORD GARNET'S LAND!"

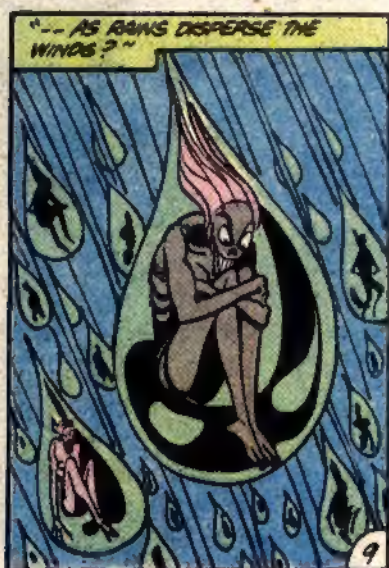
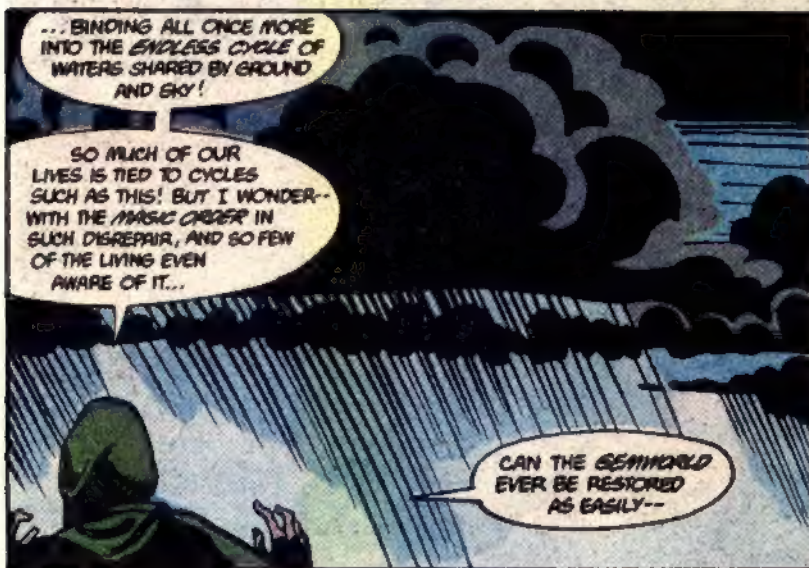
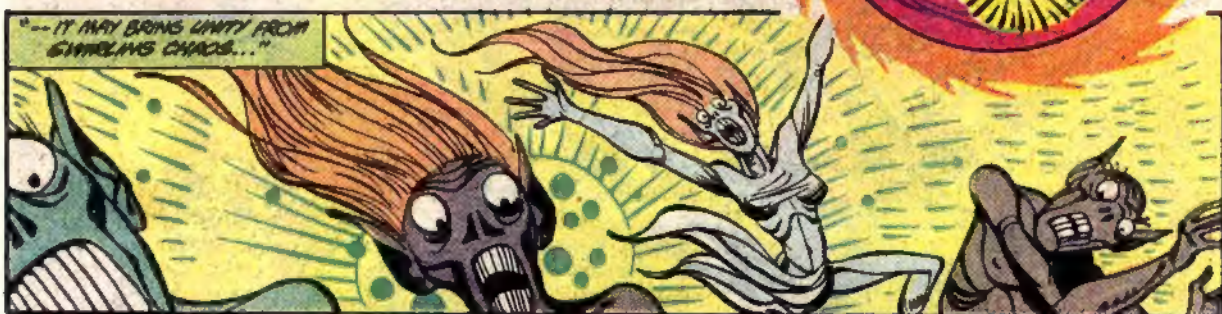
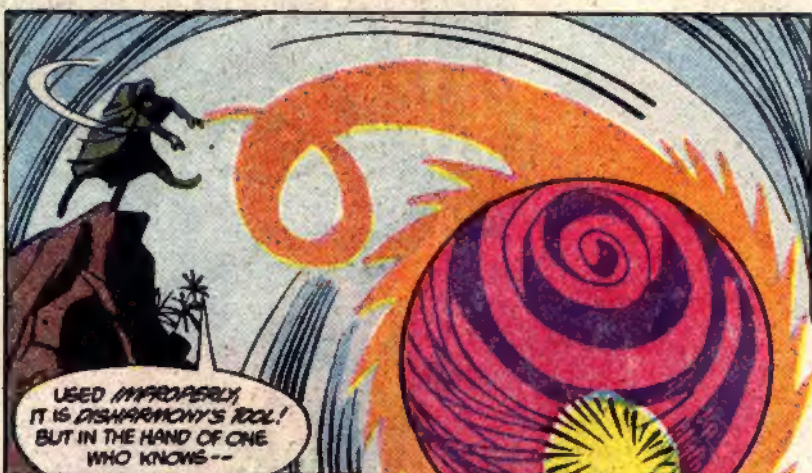
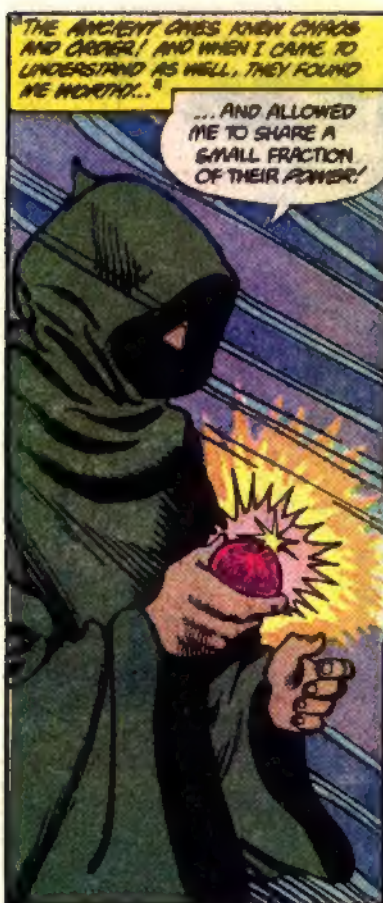
BUT THE GATHERING WHIRLWIND WILL DESTROY THE MIGHTY PEAKS--AND THE CASTLE THAT STANDS UPON THEM!

AND IN THE END, THE DEMONS WILL BUT SHEAR THEMSELVES APART IN A FURRY THEY CAN NO LONGER CONTROL!

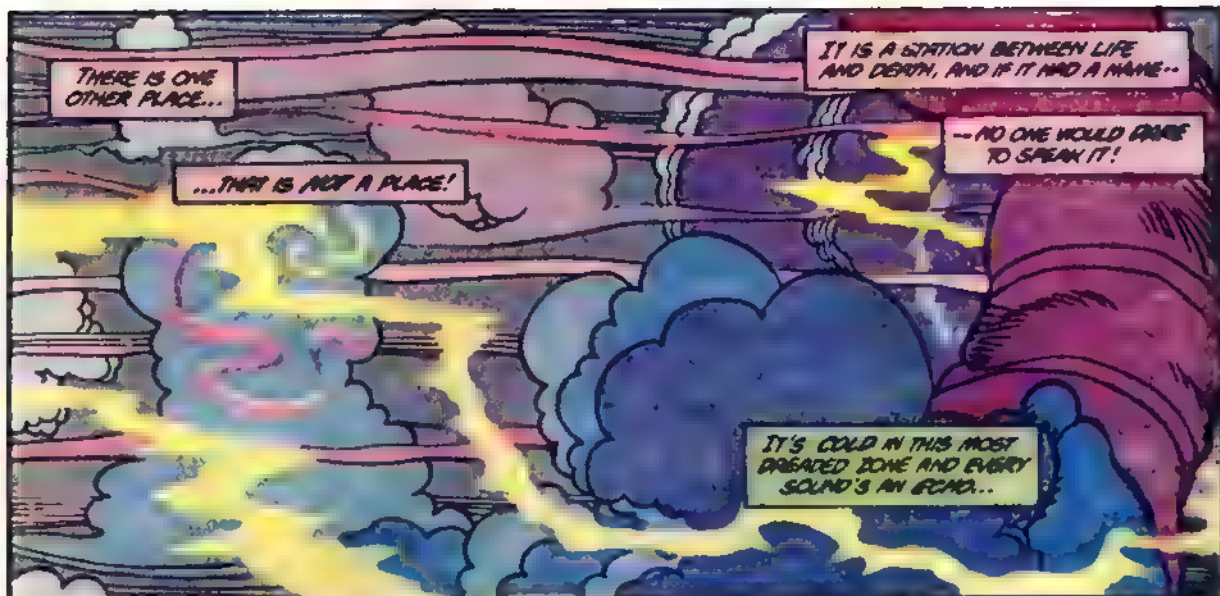
IT IS, I KNOW, BUT A TINY PART OF THE MADNESS WHICH HAS SWEEPED OVER THE GEMWORLD--AND WHICH I ALONE UNDERSTAND SO WELL!

BUT IT IS A PIECE OF THE MADNESS THAT I CAN SET ARIGHT!









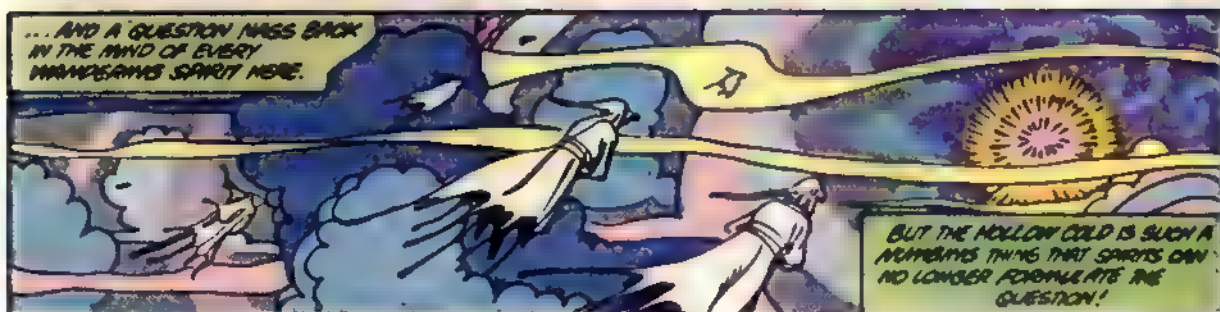
THERE IS ONE  
OTHER PLACE...

IT IS A STATION BETWEEN LIFE  
AND DEATH, AND IF IT HAD A NAME--

--NO ONE WOULD DARE  
TO SPEAK IT!

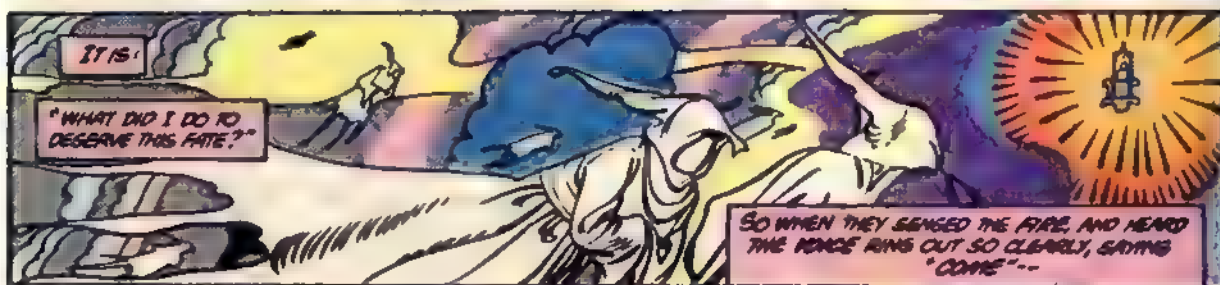
...THAT IS NOT A PLACE!

IT'S COLD IN THIS MOST  
DREADED ZONE AND EVERY  
SOUND'S AN ORdeal...



...AND A QUESTION NAGS BACK  
IN THE MIND OF EVERY  
WANDERING SPIRIT HERE.

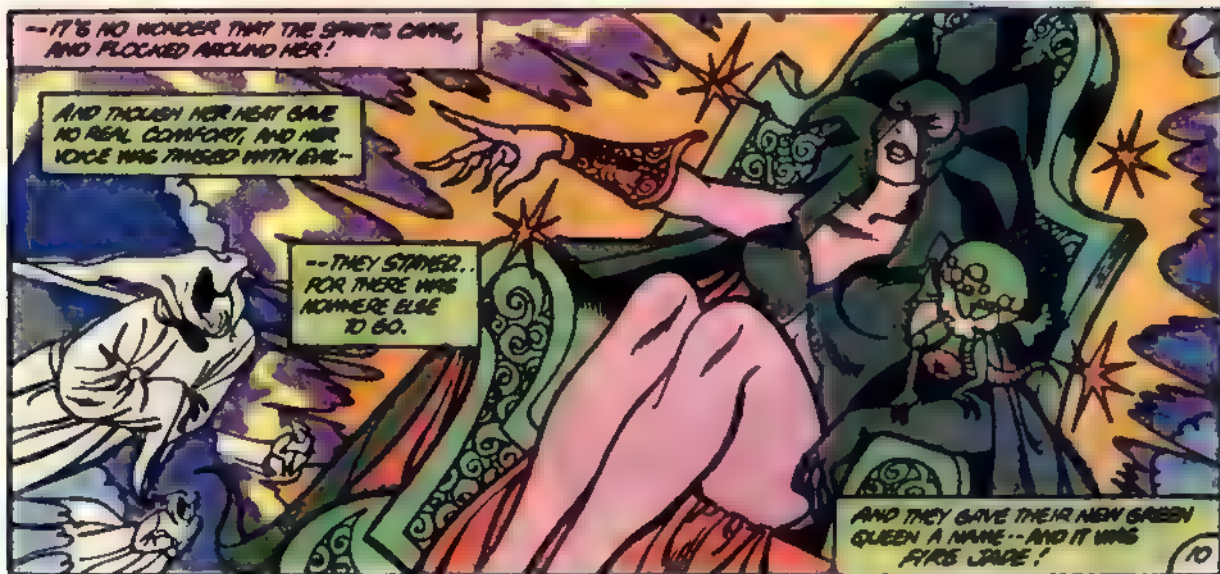
BUT THE MELLOW COLD IS SUCH A  
NUMBING THING THAT SPIRITS CAN  
NO LONGER FORMULATE THE  
QUESTION!



IT IS!

"WHAT DID I DO TO  
DESERVE THIS FATE?"

SO WHEN THEY SENGED THE FIRE, AND HEARD  
THE HEDGE RING OUT SO CLEARLY, SAYING  
"COME"--



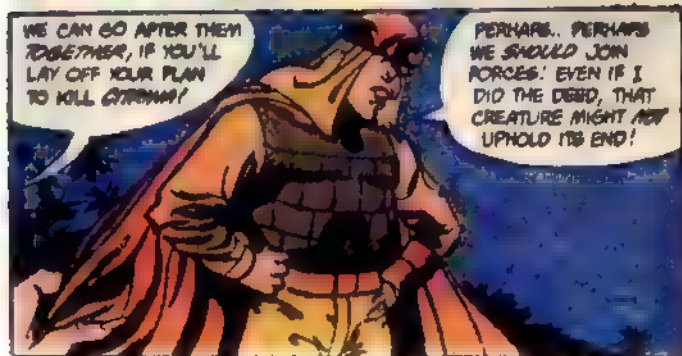
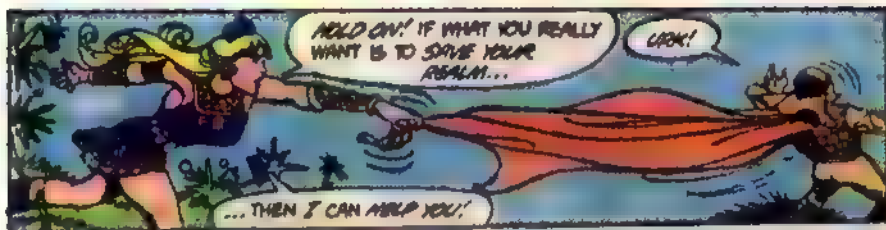
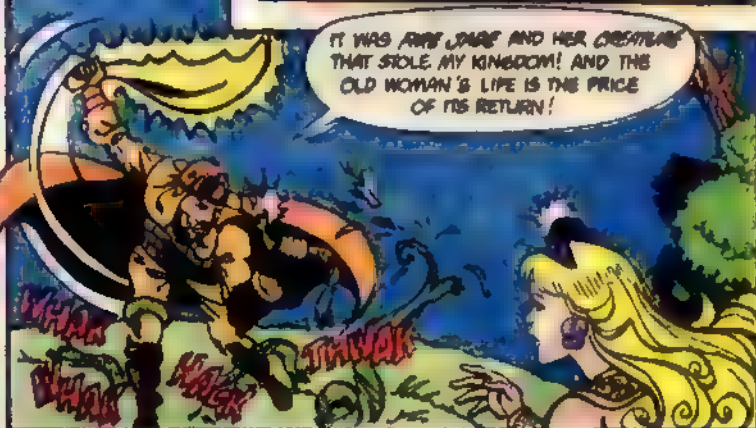
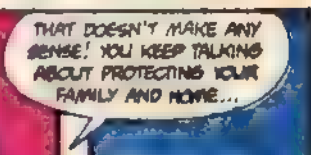
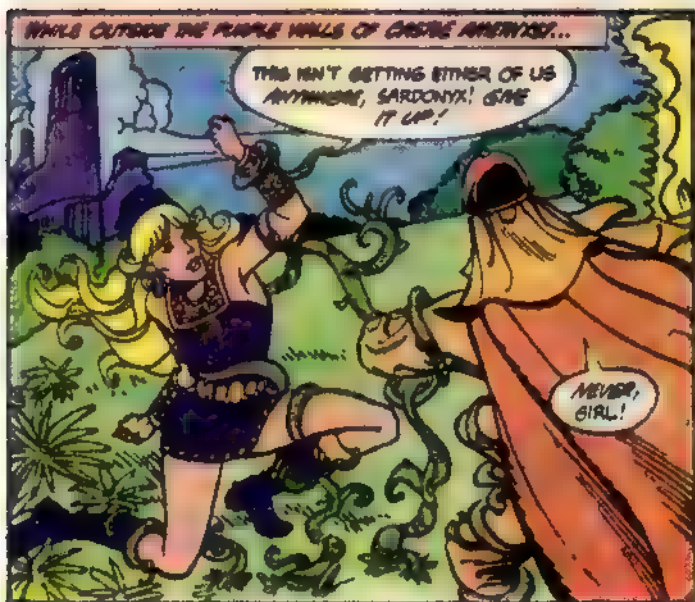
--IT'S NO WONDER THAT THE SPIRITS CAME,  
AND FLOCKED AROUND HER!

AND THOUGH HER HEAT GAVE  
NO REAL COMFORT, AND HER  
VOICE WAS JINGLED WITH GAIL--

--THEY STAYED..  
FOR THERE WAS  
NOWHERE ELSE  
TO GO.

AND THEY GAVE THEIR NEW GREEN  
QUEEN A NAME--AND IT WAS  
"FIRE JADE!"



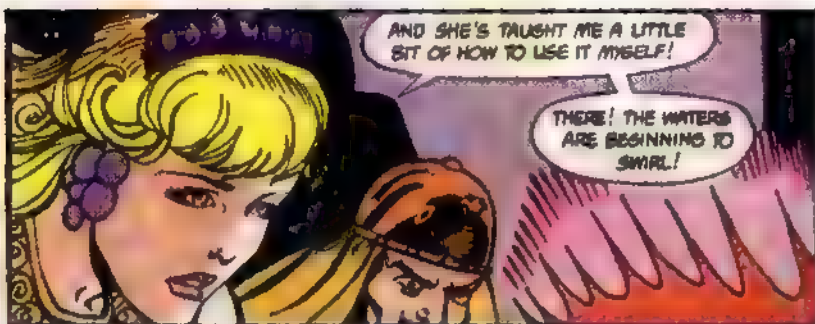






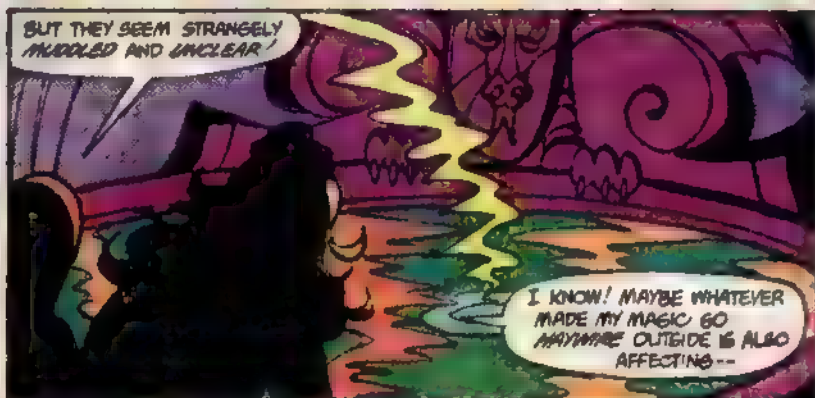
THE WELL  
OF VISION!

CITRINA'S  
GOTTEN A LOT OF  
USE OUT OF IT SINCE  
I TOOK ITS WATERS  
FROM THE WITCHES  
AT THE BOS OF ONE  
THOUSAND DECADES!



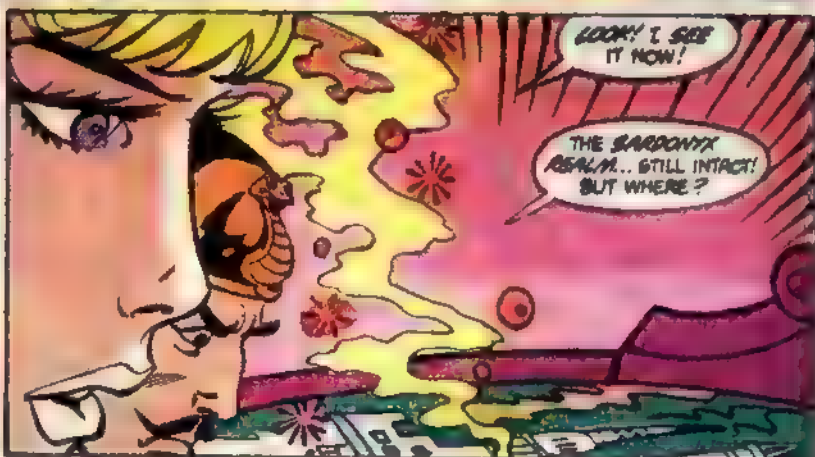
AND SHE'S TAUGHT ME A LITTLE  
BIT OF HOW TO USE IT MYSELF!

THERE! THE WATERS  
ARE BEGINNING TO  
SWIRL!



BUT THEY SEEM STRANGELY  
MUDDLED AND UNCLEAR!

I KNOW! MAYBE WHATEVER  
MADE MY MAGIC GO  
ANYWHERE OUTSIDE IS ALSO  
AFFECTING--



LOOK! I SEE  
IT NOW!

THE SARDONYX  
JEWEL... STILL INTACT!  
BUT WHERE?



I CAN'T BE SURE--  
I'M TRYING TO GET A  
FIX ON IT! BUT THE  
WATERS ARE CHANGING  
AGAIN... INTO--

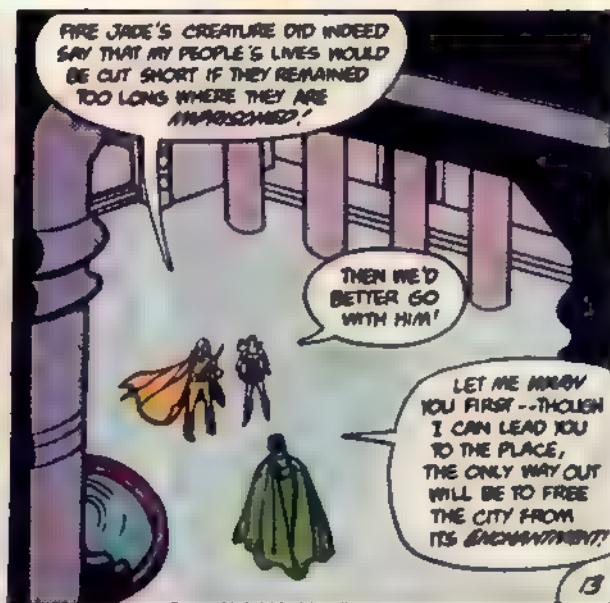
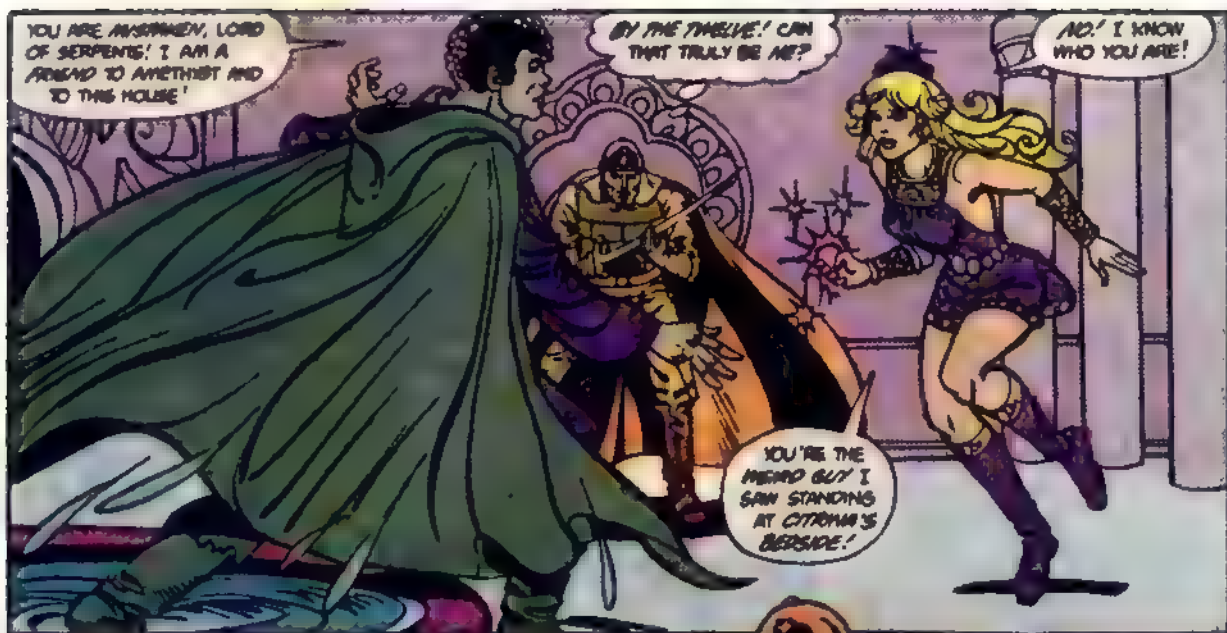
--A  
FACE...?



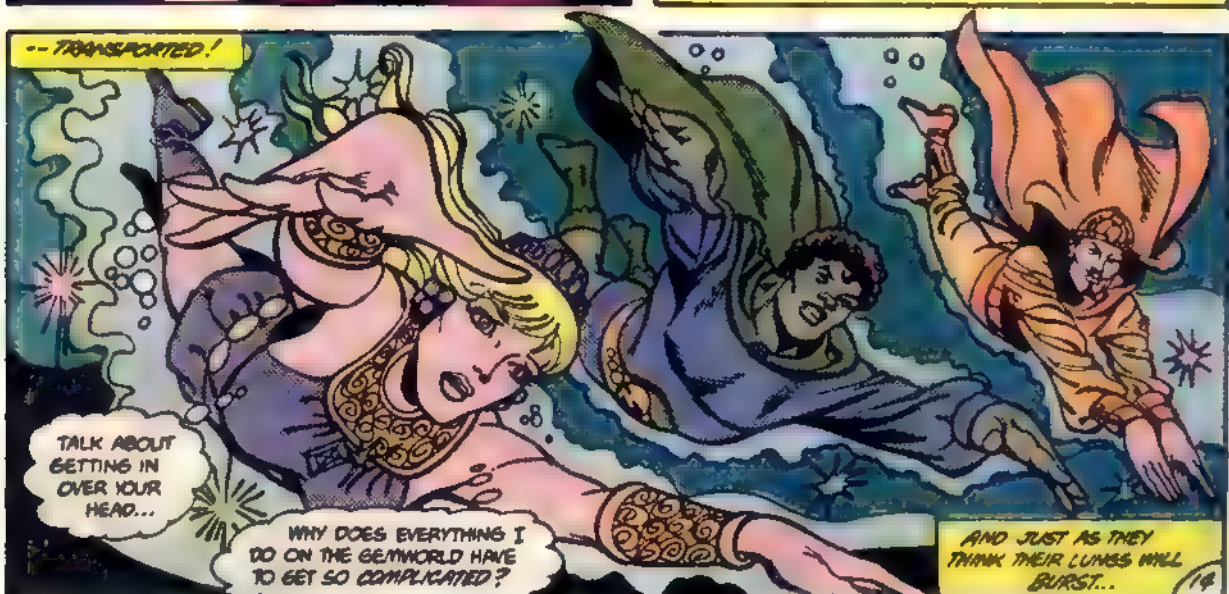
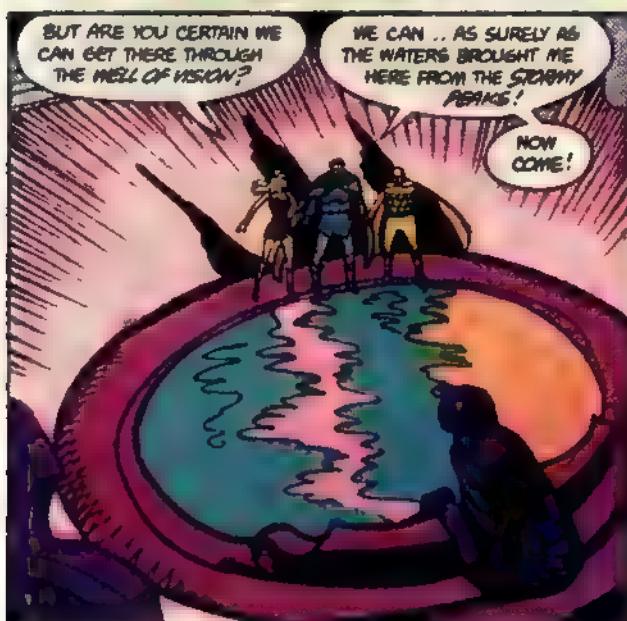
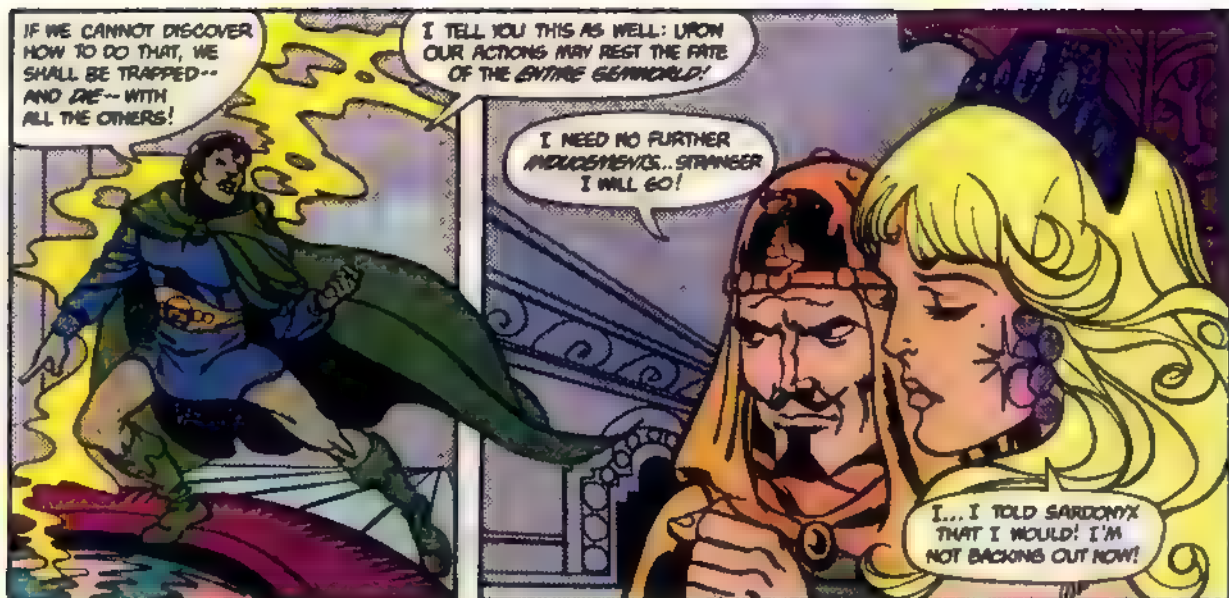
PRINCESS,  
STAND ASIDE!

WE ARE  
ATTACKED!

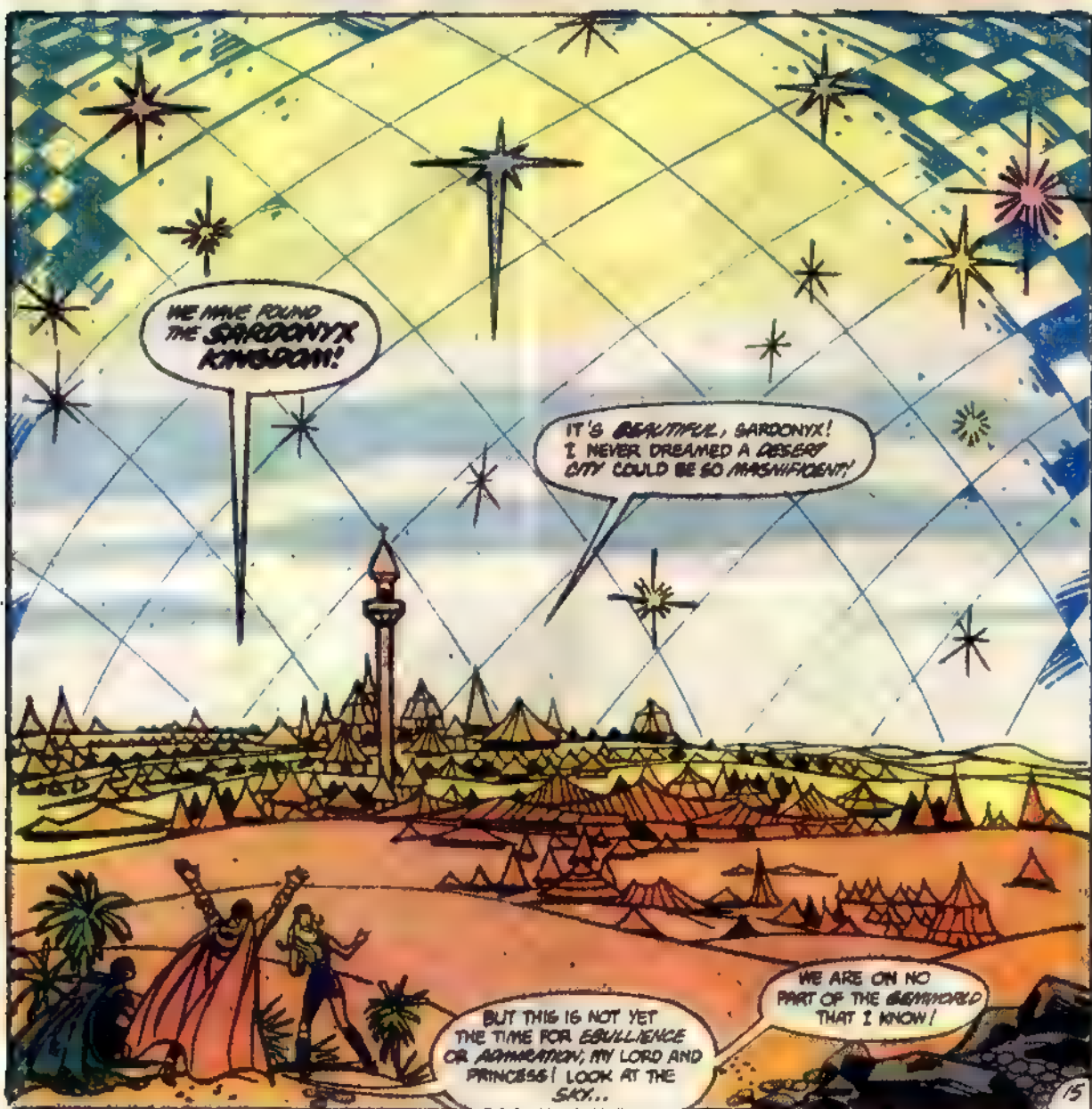
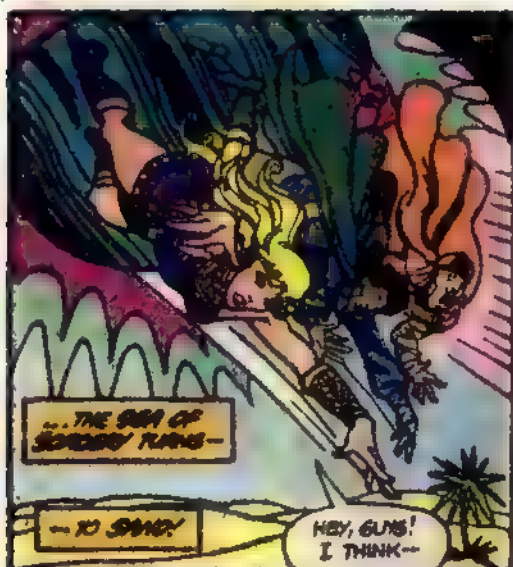










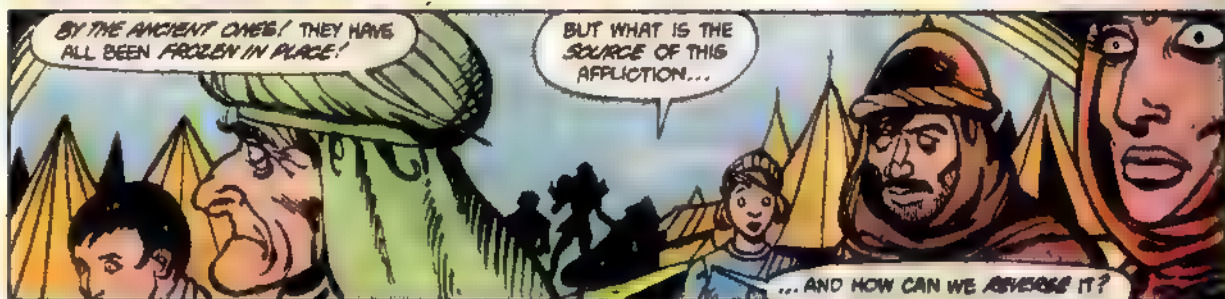






AND AS THE THREE UNLIKELY ALLIES NEAR THE CITY IN THE SANDS...

WHY'S EVERYBODY STANDING THERE LIKE THAT, SARDONYX? YOU'D ALMOST THINK--



BY THE ANCIENT ONES! THEY HAVE ALL BEEN FROZEN IN PLACE!

BUT WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF THIS AFFLICTION...

...AND HOW CAN WE REVERSE IT?



THAT IS SOMETHING WE MUST--

LOOK! LOOK AT THEIR ARMS! THEY'VE BEEN TRANSFORMED TO CRUSTAL!



I SUSPECT THE PROCESS IS CONTINUING, MY LORD! AND ONCE THESE PEOPLE ARE COMPLETELY ALTERED TO A CRUSTAL STATE...

...THEY WILL BE LOST FOREVER!

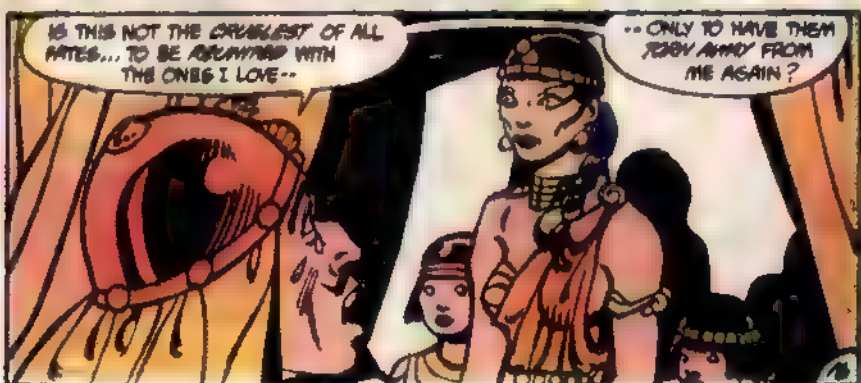


NO! MY LADY! CHILDREN! I AM COMING FOR YOU!



SARDONYX, WAIT! WE'VE GOT TO--

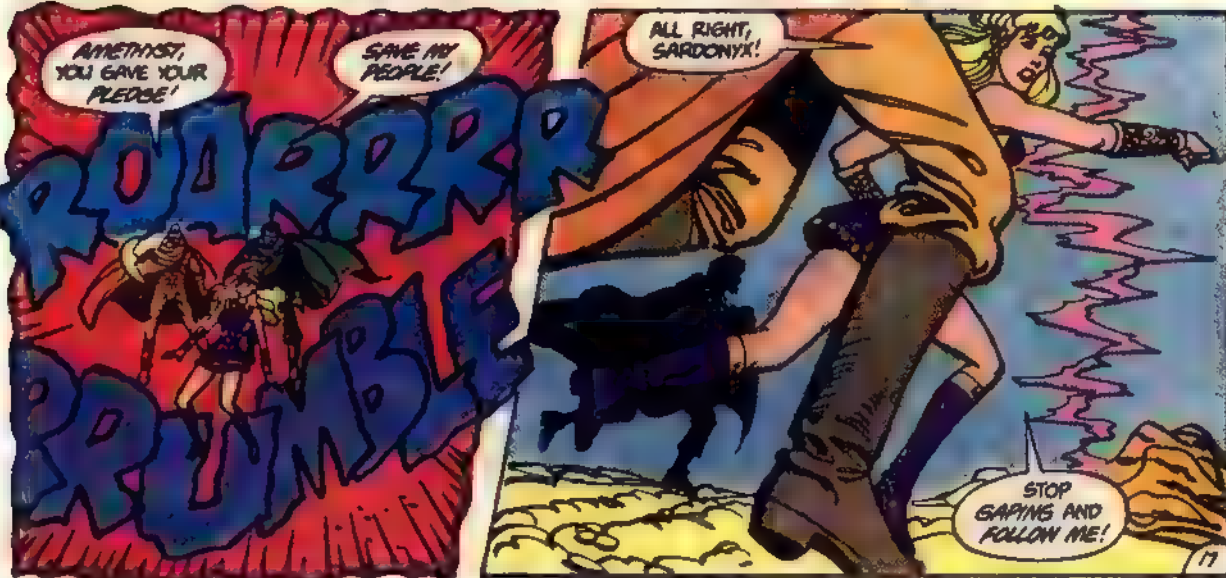
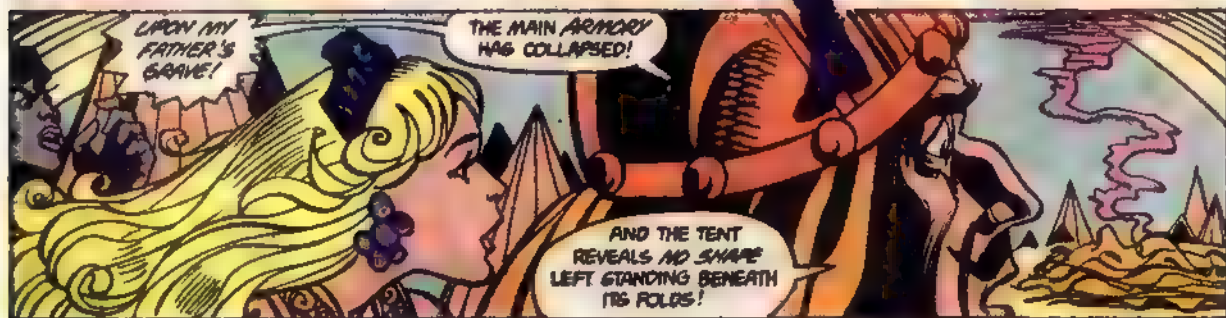
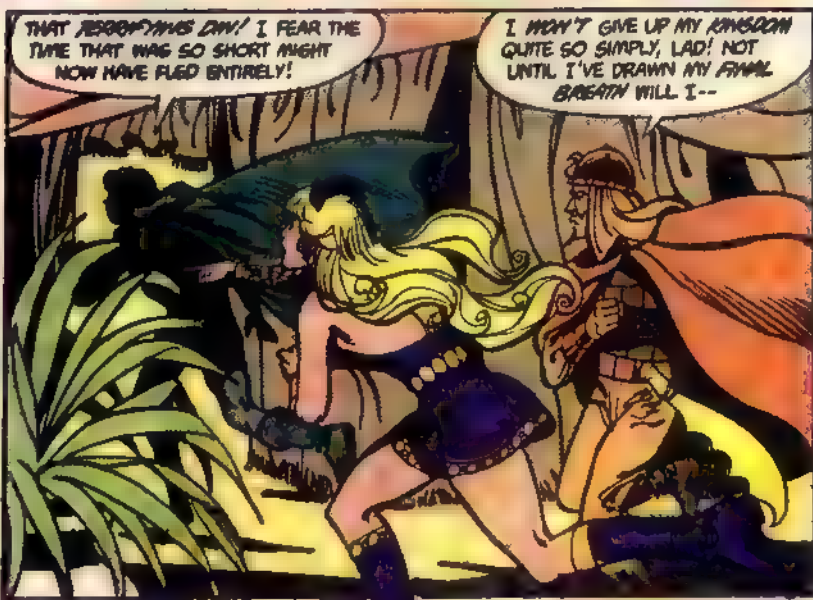
OMIGOD!



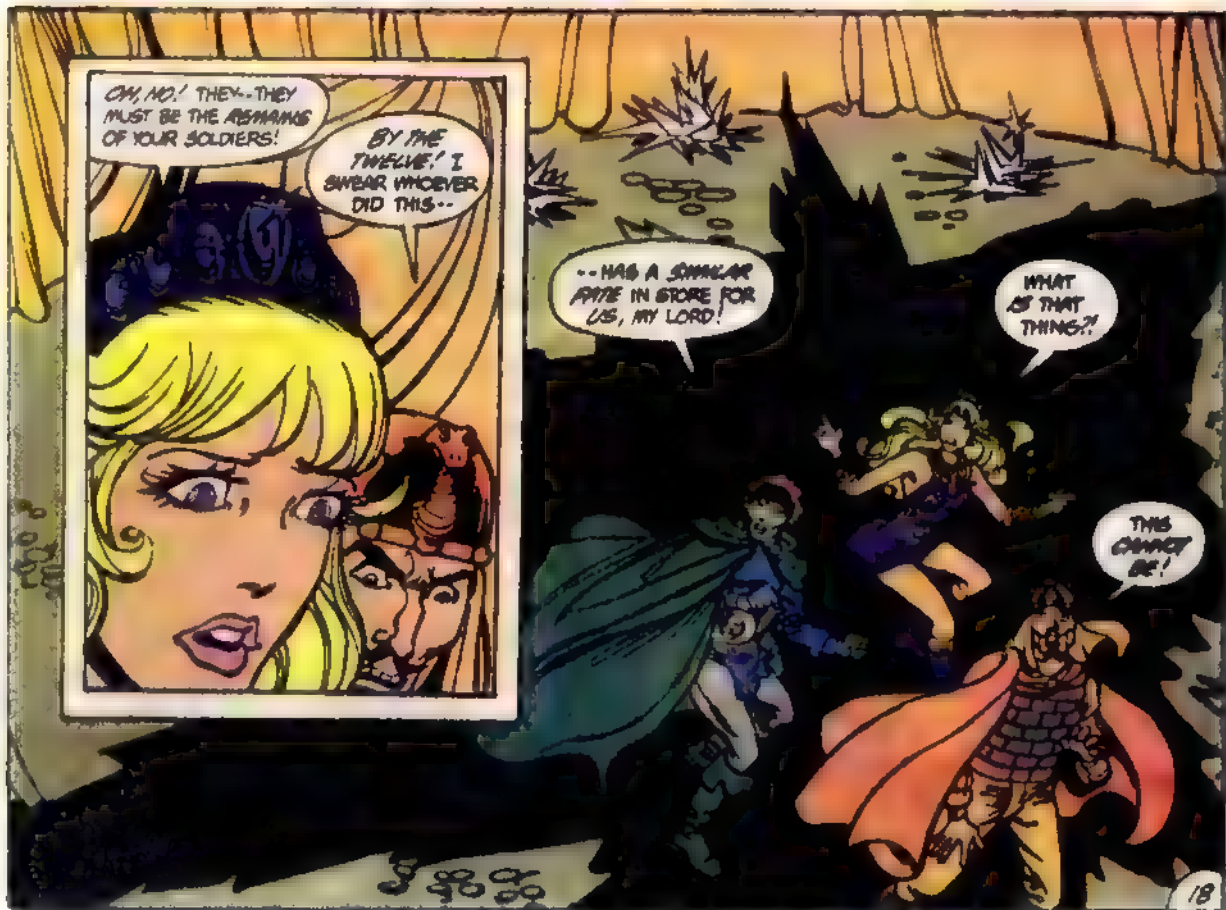
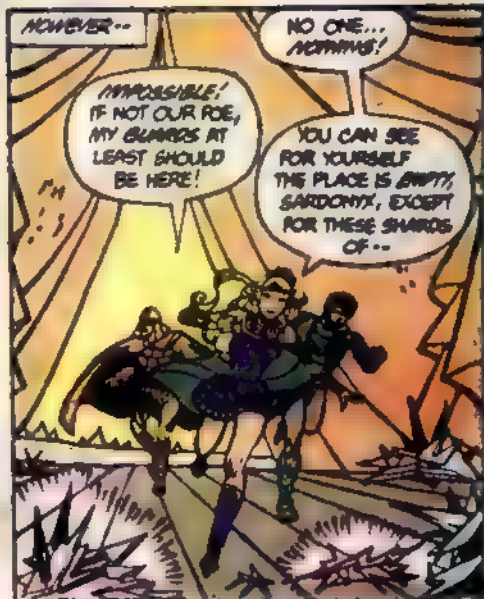
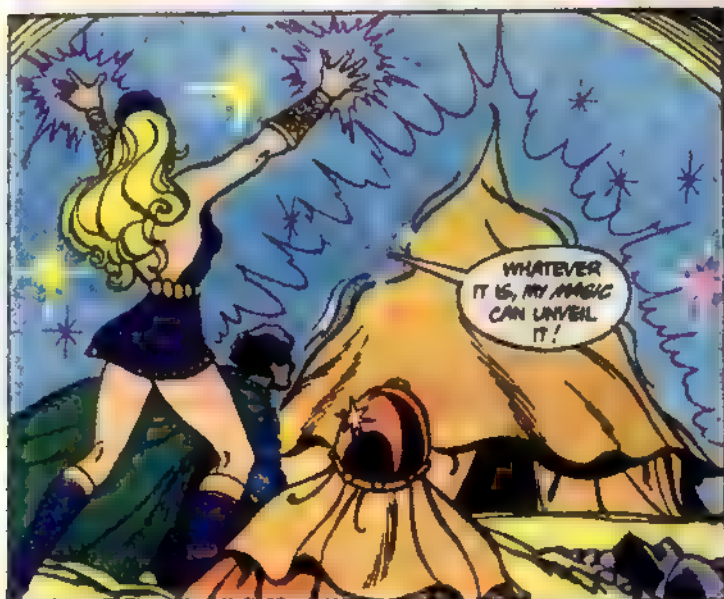
IS THIS NOT THE CRUELTEST OF ALL FATES... TO BE ABANDONED WITH THE ONES I LOVE--

...ONLY TO HAVE THEM TOSSED AWAY FROM ME AGAIN?













YOUR EYES DO NOT  
DECEIVE YOU, LORD SARDONYX!  
DESPITE ALL ITS IMMENSITY,  
THAT IS A GORGING EATER!

BUT THEY ARE *THEY* CREATURES  
FEELS NO BIGGER THAN A  
THUMBNAIL! MY DOMAIN IS  
FULL OF THEM!

THEN YOU FOLKS  
MUST HAVE AWFULLY  
BIG THUMBS!



PERHAPS THE CREATURE WAS  
AFFECTED THUSLY BY THE SPELL  
THAT TRANSPORTED MY REALM  
TO THIS STRANGE PLACE!

HOW ELSE EXPLAIN  
ITS MONSTROUS  
GROWTH?



THE EXPLANATIONS ARE  
GOING TO HAVE TO  
WAIT, SARDONYX...

**WHACKK**

...WHILE WE  
CONCENTRATE ON  
KEEPING THE THING  
FROM KILLING US!

AND YET THE SERPENT LORD'S  
SUGGESTION BRINGS ONE OTHER  
POSSIBILITY TO MIND!

**ZOWWEEKKKK**  
**THWACK**

MAYHAP THE CRYSTAL  
EATER IS ITS PROPER  
SIZE...





AND ALL ELSE HAS BEEN DIMINISHED?  
THAT WOULD BE A WAY TO HIDE AN  
ENTIRE KINGDOM!

LET ME FIRST USE  
THE POWER OF  
MY GEMSTONE TO...

OH MY GEM IS  
GONE! GONE!!

UH-OH, SARDONYX  
IS DOWN!

AND MY MAGIC IS  
SPATTERING AGAIN!  
WE'RE IN TROUBLE!

DOWN I MAY BE...  
AND FORGOTTEN  
BY THE CRYSTAL  
EATER!

BUT THE GRAYMON'S  
GOLDEN CLAW I  
STILL POSSESS--

IT'S SHOWERING  
DOWN TO  
NOTHING!

--SHOULD LIKELY  
JOG ITS MEMORY  
OF ME!





AND LOOK, YOUR GEM'S COME BACK... AFTER YOU NEEDED IT MOST!



EH? I MUST EXAMINE IT! HMM, THE HEFT OF IT FEELS STRANGELY WRONG SOMEHOW AND--



MY CITY... THIS CITY... ~~INSIDE~~ THE GEMSTONE!



THEN YOU GUYS WERE RIGHT! THE CITY WAS REDUCED-- AND WE MUST HAVE SHRUNK WHEN WE SWAM THROUGH THE MIST!

THAT EXPLAINS WHY YOU COULDN'T USE YOUR GEM TO HELP US OUT JUST NOW...



WE'RE ~~INSIDE~~ THE GEM AT THE SAME TIME YOU'RE HOLDING IT IN YOUR HAND--

--AND ALL ITS ~~POSITIVE~~ ENERGIES ARE BEING USED TO MAINTAIN THAT ~~ARMOR~~!



BUT... WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU SMASHED THE GEM?

DESTROY MY BIRTH-RIGHT? IF YOU ARE MAD!



NO! AMETHYST HAS DIVINED THE WAY TO SAVE YOUR KINGDOM AND OURSELVES!

SHE HAS LEARNED WELL FROM CITRINA'S TURFLAZE!

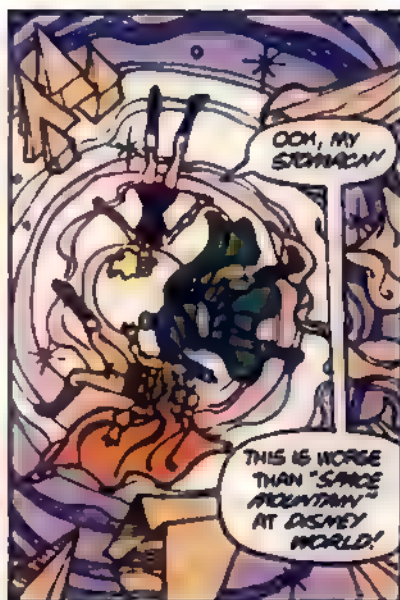


IF THAT MEANS ANYTHING TO YOU!

IT DOES, GIRL! EVEN HER ~~ENEMIES~~ RESPECT THE WITCH-MOTHER'S POWER-- BUT...

TIME GROWS SHORT, SARDONYX!



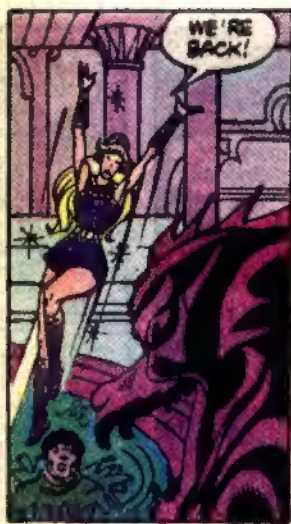






...AND SARDONYX HAS ASSAILED ALL THE POWER WE STOLE FROM HIM!

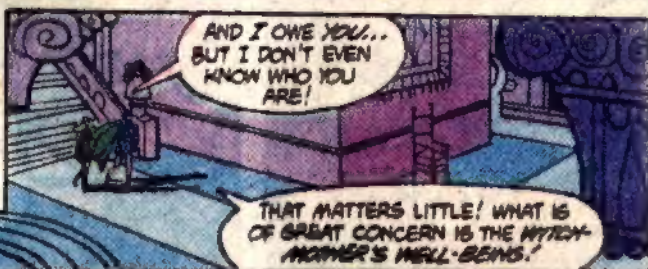
BUT I SWEAR HE WILL NOT HAVE IT LONGS!



WE'RE BACK!



CITRINA'S SAVED AND SARDONYX OWES ME ONE!



AND I OWE YOU... BUT I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO YOU ARE!

THAT MATTERS LITTLE! WHAT IS OF GREAT CONCERN IS THE MYTH-MOTHER'S WELL-BEING!



SHE'S STILL SLEEPING.

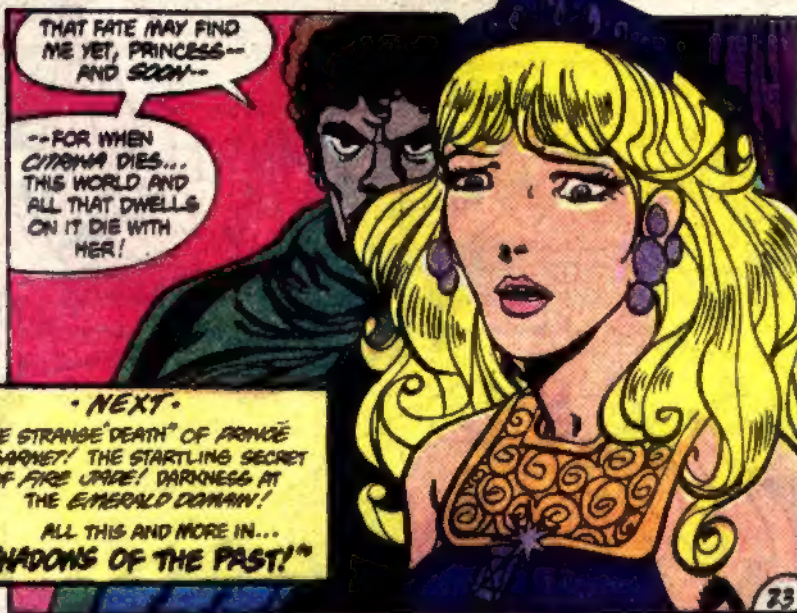
STILL DYING, AMETHYST! AND UNTIL SHE CAN BE CURED, THE LIVES OF EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US ARE IN JEOPARDY!

PERHAPS IT IS TIME I TOLD YOU ALL I KNOW--BEGINNINGS WITH MY NAME...



...PRINCE GARNET!

HUH? BUT HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD! #



THAT FATE MAY FIND ME YET, PRINCESS-- AND SOON--

--FOR WHEN CITRINA DIES... THIS WORLD AND ALL THAT DWELLS ON IT DIE WITH HER!

• NEXT •

THE STRANGE DEATH OF PRINCE GARNET! THE STARTLING SECRET OF FIRE UPRISE! DARKNESS AT THE EMERALD DOMAIN!

ALL THIS AND MORE IN... "SHADOWS OF THE PAST!"



# Purple Prose



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606 Fifth Avenue  
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Dear Karen,

I was quite surprised to find the battle against Fire Jade reaching its conclusion at the end of AMETHYST #3. I was expecting a far longer story. Not that I believe for one minute that we have seen the last of Fire Jade. (I still say she is Amethyst's "alter ego.")

The battle itself was worthy of the "build-up" given it in the Annual and issue #1 and #2. It wasn't just a pyrotechnic display of fleshing magical spells (although such were there and done extremely well, too), but a further insight into the personalities of Amethyst, her companions, and her enemies. I particularly enjoyed Moonstone's silent but nevertheless eloquent reaction to Amethyst's attempt to introduce democracy into the Gemworld on page 23. (Would Dan and/or Gary happen to have read Christopher Stasheff's excellent books *The Warlock in Spite of Himself* and *King Kobold*? A similar theme was explored in those fantasy novels.) I look forward to further development of this aspect of AMETHYST.

Ric and Romeo look to be settling into this series very quickly. Issue #3 is the best yet for artwork. I do hope you can keep this pair together for a good long run, if not longer. Don't let Carl Gafford go, either. His coloring is perfect for AMETHYST.

All the Best,  
Dale Coe  
41 Whitecross Road  
Warrington  
Cheshire, England

Many readers were also surprised that the Fire Jade plot line apparently ended so abruptly in issue #3. Dale, but as we glimpsed this month, her story ain't dead yet. Fire Jade is still very much around and kicking, and in just thirty days, we'll finally find out who she really is. In the meantime, the following reader has some ideas of his own.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Karen,

On picking up issue #3 of AMETHYST, PRINCESS OF GEMWORLD, I thought, "This is it. Here comes the big showdown." I must admit, though, I never expected you to kill her off. On page 11, panel 1, Fire Jade says she wishes one of the nobles could be spared and then on page 18, panel 5, Emerald says, "She could have slain me with that blast, but she did not! Why?!" I think I know. Since

Lady Emerald died, her magic was inherited by the younger princesses. But I think most of the power went to the eldest Emerald. Yes, I mean the one that supposedly died in the AMETHYST maxi-series. Yes, people, I'm saying the eldest is still alive! She somehow got changed by Dark Opal into Fire Jade. Fire Jade's power is an elemental power and so was Lady Emerald's. Generally the power is inherited by the eldest. She could not bear to kill her sister and as she was apparently killed as a result, I hope you understand what I'm saying. Until #4 comes, I'll be waiting. I also want to tell you that you all are doing miracles with AMETHYST. I have every issue of AMETHYST from the maxi-series to #3 and I love them. My favorite character is Carnelian.

Steven Plagman  
Midwest City, OK 73130

*Convincing detective work, Steven, but I'm afraid you're just going to have to wait and see if you're right, and that goes for our next few readers, as well! Ah, I love a good mystery!*

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Dear Purple Prose,

Fire Jade looked exceedingly familiar and issue #3 clinched it! Fire Jade is the Princess Emerald's eldest sister! Dark Opal had apparently used his dark magicks to "kill" and transform Princess Emerald into Fire Jade, apparently to be either a servant of his or as payment to "someone."

When a lord and lady have several daughters or sons, all called prince/princess, how do they differentiate their kid's names like with the three princesses Emerald? Do they give their kid's nicknames or call them 1, 2, and 3?

Will Amethyst become Lady Amethyst in the long run? I hope so. I also hope the romance between Topaz and Turquoise goes through. Topaz doesn't come across as the right sort of future hubby for Amethyst.

I also want to commend you for creating and maintaining a fine cast of strong females (adult and child) of various temperaments. Thank you for thoughtfully designing them so everyone comes out as a realistic person.

Your fan,  
Nina Twersky  
14848 Manuella Rd.  
Los Altos Hills, CA

*As far as we know, Nina, the royal families have nicknames for their children, but don't be surprised someday if someone suffers from an identity crisis!*

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Dear Dan, Gary, Ric, Romeo, John, Carl, and Karen,

AMETHYST #3 was excellent! The art of Ric and Romeo is perfectly suited (although I would like to see Ernie Colón working on AMETHYST) for this book. At times, Ric makes the characters look rather odd, i.e. Princess Emerald on pg. 3 and the Diamond Priest on pg. 4, panels 5 & 6. Aside from trivial things like this, the art was wonderful. Ric really brings out the magic of the Gemworld.

Please, let (better yet, make!) Topaz stop loving Turquoise! In the maxi-series, he was wonderful when he was with Amethyst. This romance does not bode well for Amethyst. Topaz will be in hot water when Amethyst confronts him ...

Too bad you killed off Fire Jade. She was a character with immense potential. While we're on the subject of Fire Jade, I think I know why she did not kill Emerald on pg. 18, panel 4. Look at page 8, panel 8. Here is "power beyond mortality ... power reaching from past the grave ..." Could it be that Fire Jade is Princess Emerald's sister that died (?) at the hands of Dark Opal in the maxi-series? She might have been resurrected by some unknown power, and (possibly) filled with hate at the Gemworld for not coming to her aid when she was taken to dark Opal's palace. If this is true, then when she attacked Emerald, she may have felt pity for her sister and did not kill her. Would that work?

Long may Amethyst reign.  
Scott Jolley  
800 Marion St.  
Natchitoches, LA 71457

P.S. Even though Opal is my birthstone, I still like Amethyst. I hope you won't hold that against me.

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Dear Karen,

I just finished reading AMETHYST #3, "Rebellion," and I thought I would write you a letter and let you know how much I enjoy AMETHYST. All my friends enjoy AMETHYST too. Whenever they talk to



me, they ask if I got the latest issue yet. I especially enjoyed Fire Jade. She was drawn particularly well. Was the person of royalty that she wanted to save Emerald? Did she want to spare her because she is really the oldest Emerald princess? And why do I have a feeling that we haven't seen the last of her? I can hardly wait to see what happened to Sardonyx.

You probably get a lot of letters from fans, so I don't expect you to print this, but it would be nice.

Anne Simmons  
18 Frost Dr.  
Durham, NH 03824

P.S. I was thinking, wouldn't it be great if you did a story of what happened on the Gemworld before Princess Amethyst came to overthrow Dark Opal? I really would like to know the whole story.

*Den and Gary promise me that real soon they'll be telling us of life on the Gemworld, pre-Amethyst, Anne, and... Ernie Colón (remember him?) has agreed to draw it!*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Purple Prose,

I am furious with you! You killed Fire Jade! Worse, we never got to see her face! The only good thing about her dying was that Princess Emerald was saved. Furthermore, you teamed up Topaz and Turquoise. I personally prefer the Amethyst/Topaz couple. Though I like Lady Turquoise, Amethyst is my favorite.

This brings me to another topic, the ex-Lord Dark Opal. What is to be done with his land? Will it be given to the elves, fairies, dwarves, etc? Or to (pleases!) Princess Opal (Whitel)? Whatever, I'll be happy. I'm sure you guys won't disappoint me.

Keep up the good, excellent, terrific, great ... work. And to Ric Estrada, you too.

Sincerely,  
Sara Sjoberg  
2474 Opden  
Orchard Lake, MI 48033

*In the Annual, Sara, we saw that Dark Opal's dismal, diseased domain had been transformed into a beautiful, thriving, lush land. At this point, it's just free territory, belonging to no beings in particular. A White Opal kingdom, however, has crossed our minds more than once, so that's usually a good sign that something is in the works.*

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Dear Purplish Ones,

I must say that I was surprised to see Fire Jade so quickly and easily disposed of in #3—and with her true nature and purpose so little revealed, too. I can only assume (and hope) that she will be back sometime soon.

I was interested by Quaar's idea to see his "realm ruled by its people." This puts Amethyst in an interesting position.

Being American by upbringing, she is glad to see the start of democracy on Gemworld, as evidenced by her praising Quaar as the Thomas Jefferson of Gemworld. However, at the same time, she is also the leader of the aristocracy on Gemworld. Does she really want to see her power diminished? And what of her fellow aristocrats? Hereditary rulers throughout Earth's history have been notoriously unwilling to give up their powers. And ironically, good and benevolent rulers may be even less so disposed, since they feel they are good rulers and a move to government by the people could only lead to poorer government. Besides, do the people of Gemworld have the experience or background to allow for a successful democracy? (They didn't even know what the word meant!)

This leads to another point. Amethyst should be wary of pushing Quaar and his people into her vision of a "true" democracy. She was raised in a mature democratic society, but American democracy is an outgrowth of centuries of gradual development. Even during colonial days, there were significant democratic freedoms and institutions in America (and, in fact, colonial America was freer than the vast majority of the world that time). But, as far as I can see, there are virtually no democratic institutions on Gemworld. They would seem to be at a stage somewhat comparable to Britain and the Magna Carta—which established certain freedoms and rule of law within the nobility. (It was a long time after that any democratic freedoms were devolved to the common people.) A full-blown democracy may not be possible on Gemworld at this time—in fact it may not even be what the people want as yet. By "ruled by its people," Quaar may mean what we consider only limited democracy—and what do the rest of the people think? (For instance, even the peasants who actively rebelled in Medieval Europe did not want to completely overthrow the system. Indeed, they usually showed a great loyalty to and placed great trust in the king—often sadly betrayed.)

The clash of cultures within Amy/Amethyst could be a very interesting study. And by stowing her away on Earth, the people of Gemworld may have received in return more than they ever dreamed possible (or desirable?).

Yours truly,  
"T.M. Maple"  
Box 1272 Station B  
Weston, ONT

*Amethyst is the only one of the Gemworld rulers that we feel would currently consider favoring a democracy in their own kingdom because of her obvious earth experiences. The other nobility would be extremely reticent to even share their power with the "common folk," for exactly the reasons you cite. T.M. Whether the Aquamarines will succeed or fail in their "new" government, we shall see as time marches on. But, at least now, Amethyst has helped*

*to give them the chance to sink or fall on their own.*

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Dear Karen:

I just finished the Mar. '85 issue of AMETHYST (for the fourth time) and I just felt that I really should sit down and write you and your staff a letter. I really love the whole idea that you have based this book on. I loved it when it was a maxi-series and I even love it more now that it is a monthly comic. I have been hooked on it since I read my first issue last year. I liked it so much that I just had to have the whole series, so I am proud to announce that I have now the full series; all 17 issues.

I do have just a couple of questions, though. First, don't you think we could find a better guy for Amethyst than Topaz? I just don't think he is the kind of guy for her. I'd like to see a stronger type of guy for her to fall in love with, maybe a warrior/priest from a distant and forgotten house. I hope you don't turn the land of Aquamarine into a democracy. I like the non-real world of Gemworld and to turn it into a democracy would start to make it real and earthbound. Let's keep Earth and Gemworld separated by the portal and the realm-between.

I hope you will think about my suggestions, and keep up the great work on this most wonderful comic. By the way, my birthday is Feb. 22, which makes me born doubly under the Amethyst; once for being born in Feb, and once under Pisces. So I really feel a part of the House of AMETHYST.

Respectfully,  
HM2 David Richard Daniel  
Battalion Aid Station  
3rd BN 1st Marines  
Camp Pendleton, CA 92055

*Topaz was designed to be Amethyst's knight in shining armor, although he hasn't always lived up to that initial expectation, especially now that he's involved with "another woman." As for another man in Amethyst's life ... anyone have any suggestions?*

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*That's all for now, folks. Be sure to be with us next month, 'cause we'll be looking for you! And don't forget that there's still time to submit your suggestions for the "NAME THAT UNICORN CONTEST" that was announced here last issue. That's Amethyst's unicorn we're talking about, of course, and it wants a name! The lucky winner will receive an original piece of AMETHYST art! See you soon—Karen*





# GUEST

## MEANWHILE.

### BEN ODA REMEMBERED

BY ANDREW HELFER

You probably never thought twice about Ben Oda. He was never interviewed by the fanzines. He was never the guest of honor at a comics convention. Fans never begged him for his autograph. The spotlight never touched him. And there's probably a very good reason for that. Ben Oda was neither writer nor artist nor comic book creator. He was just one of the hundreds of people who put the finishing touches on comics. Ben Oda was, to put it simply, a letterer.

But Ben Oda had a fan club. An exclusive group. We kept its very existence a secret. Instead of calling it "The Ben Oda Fan Club," we called it DC Comics. To us, Ben was not only our favorite comic book letterer; he was also our favorite human being. And when he passed away a few weeks ago, we all became acutely aware of a space in our lives that would never again be filled.

Ben Oda was one of an ever-dwindling group of comic book professionals—the "old timers." He worked on comics in their infancy, through their heyday, and right into the present. In the forties, his distinctive lettering style graced the pages of Jack Kirby's early work. In the fifties, when Harvey Kurtzman needed hand-lettering for his now-famous EC war comics, Ben was the man asked to

do it. He was a letterer for the Chicago Tribune and King Features Syndicate, regularly turning out pages of Prince Valiant, Little Orphan Annie, The Phantom, and others too numerous to mention. And until mere days before he left us, Ben was also the most prolific letterer working at DC Comics.

Those are the facts—they're easy to tell. What's harder to explain is the way Ben touched us all—every day of his life.

Among other letterers, Ben was the acknowledged master—I remember Tom Orzekowski's delight over being introduced to him some years ago; and Bob Lappan literally studied Ben's work with a comprehensiveness that Ben found both flattering and confusing. He never quite understood why anyone would give his work a second glance—as far as he was concerned, his job was simply to make the writer and artist look as good as possible.

And that's exactly what Ben did so well—twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, or so it seemed. Ben would come into the DC offices every day at four-thirty in the afternoon (you could set your clock to it) with a staggering number of lettered pages. If you had a book that needed to be lettered overnight, you just gave it to Ben. Truth to tell, we took him for granted. He was the ultimate pinch-hitter, and he got the DC team out of more than one deadline jam. But, like most pinch-hitters, he seldom received the praise he deserved.

And as much as we'd all like to believe otherwise, Ben was no speed demon. He'd work long hours, sit

hunched over his drawing board late into the night, all to meet what he undoubtedly felt was a personal commitment to a friend. Sometimes, in his desire to please and help out, he would push himself too far, and the strain would show. Often, the results were hilarious. Once in a while, Batman might "fight a wart on crime," and Superman might be referred to as "The Man of Steel." We'd laugh together over Ben's occasional blooper, and seldom think about the sleepless nights he'd put in just to get the job finished. Again, we took him for granted.

But when the job was finally done, Ben would sit himself down in one editorial office or another and just shoot the breeze. This was where you really got to know and appreciate Ben. He could talk about practically anything—World War II and his time in the service (he was a paratrooper, a spy, and a part-time baseball player), his memories of comic book pros he'd worked with in the past, his family, the performance of various players on his Monday night bowling team, and the current state of the comic book field. All his stories and opinions were delivered with such a keen sense of humor that you couldn't help but laugh.

But there was more to Ben than just that. When Ben told a story, he became a kind of Japanese Will Rogers, a homespun humorist with a shy smile that could melt ice. Dozens of wrinkles etched into his face, laugh lines mingling with the ones that simply come with age, Ben often seemed like an ancient yet humane sage, always aware of the humor in life, and enjoying every minute of it. You had only to talk to Ben to see that this was true. His eyes would sparkle with life, and in an almost mystical transference, our eyes would sparkle too.

And perhaps, when all is said and done, this was the most wonderful thing about Ben—his uncanny ability to make us smile, to make us laugh, to lift us out of our late-afternoon doldrums with a simple anecdote or tall tale—to simply be Ben. These were his gifts to us, these were the things we took for granted, and these are the things we will miss the most.

ON SALE THE WEEK

CHECK

OF MARCH 14, 1985

LIST

☐ **The Flash 346: A Mystery Man from the future stalks Flash's Rogues' Gallery!**

☐ **Superman 408: Two more titanic tales, including another new Wayne Boring short!**

☐ **Star Trek 15: The Mirror Universe saga comes to an unexpected conclusion!**

☐ **Amethyst 6: To save Citrina, Amethyst must team with her deadliest enemy!**

☐ **Jemm, Son of Saturn 10: Can Jemm survive his own execution?**

☐ **Arak, Son of Thunder 45: The Jewels of Serendeb may spell the death of Arak and Valda!**

☐ **Omega Men 27: On Wombworld, Psiom surgery has transformed the surviving Omegas!**

☐ **Legion of Super-Heroes 11: The charter Legionnaires take care of some old business, plus a Bouncing Boy solo story!**

☐ **Batman 384: The return of the deadly Calendar Men!**